HIGH LIGHTS



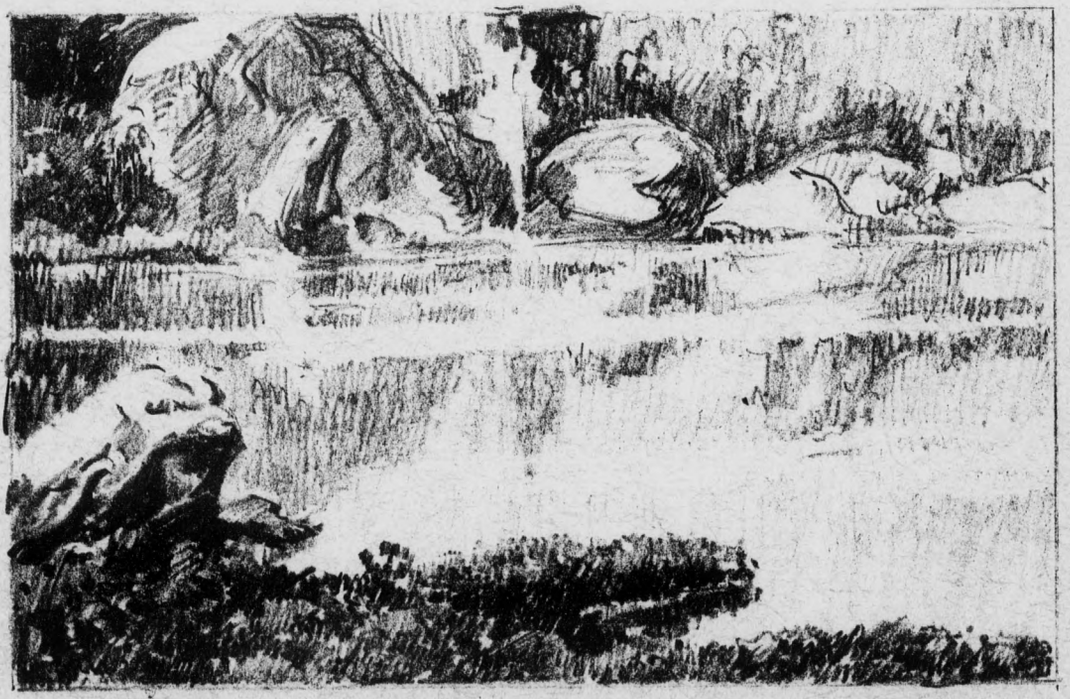
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HIGH LIGHTS

SEPTEMBER 1943 Volume 4 Number 8

C O N T E N T S

POET'S PRAYER . . Poem . . Helen Ferguson Caukin . 2

EDITORIALS. 2

GUILD MEETINGS 5

BUDGETING THE SEASONS . Article . . Beulah Thomas . 6

HORACE. . . . . .the.guild mouse. . 8

SUBMARINE ATTACK . . . Essay . . . . . Zoe Colt . 9

SAN GABRIEL EXHIBITS 10

LAGUNA BEACH EXHIBITS 10

ENRICO CONSIDERS. . . . Book Review 11

LETTER FROM VIRGINIA 12

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HIGH LIGHTS, from the foothills; issued monthly by Sierra Madre Arts Guild at the Wistaria Vine Gardens in Sierra Madre, California.

POET'S PRAYER — Helen Ferguson Caukin

Let me cleave in;
Let me settle deep,
Past discipline,
Below sleep.

Let me not be
Chaff that is blown,
Nor of any degree
Lighter than stone.

Let me press hard
To earth's stern law;
Let the sun bombard;
Let the snows thaw.

Let me grip firm,
Stubbornly dare
To announce my term
With water, air.

Let me then reach
All sorrow and mirth
On the fertile speech
And music of earth.

(Kaleidograph)

SOMNAMBULISTS

The tread of feet is incessant upon the foggy street. The footsteps of men, of women and of little children ceaselessly sound upon the ringing stones. From where do all these travelers come? Where are they going, and why? Can it be that they are weary as after a long journey, at times so heavily and so slowly they plod along as though in pain or in sorrow? Can it be that they are but just starting out for a jaunt as upon a holiday, at times so lightly and quickly they hasten as though in pleasure and joy? Singly and in groups, they emerge from

the fog at the far end of the street; they pass through the circle of vision; they vanish again into the fog the opposite way. There are never the same faces twice. They never move but in the one direction. This is a one way street. No one ever returns.

No one ever returns, not this way, at least; but perhaps by some other way they return, somnambulists of the mist following upon the segment of an endless circle. Many travel by day; but as often, though the day be long, they travel by night, moving always into the fog that never moves. They pass through the noisy and through the silent city; they pick their pathways through the empty squares and by the crowded marts; they cross the boulevards that are swept and lighted; and along the alleys, cluttered and dark, they make their way. Scarcely a one of them but halts for a time upon his journey and seems reluctant for a while to resume his route, as if he remembers something of the fog that is darker than the night that he would put off meeting again while he tarries here. Sometimes they tarry by night; but sometimes, when the night is short, they tarry by day; yet, there is hardly a one who is altogether satisfied here. Where one stands contentedly under the barren winter boughs, one hundred stand complainingly under the flowered foliage of summer. It is as if they remember something beyond the fog that is brighter than the day that they would gladly know again.

They would gladly know again a sunlight that they seem once to have known, and it is for this that the tread of feet is incessant upon the ringing stones; yet, they would put off encounter with a darkness that they seem to remember, and it is for this that they tarry here in the night.

* *

MORE THAN GOLD

Here is a new book on display in the bookseller's window. Its title is alluring. It may be very interesting, and possibly instructive as well. How can we find out about its contents? We might read it, of course; but that might necessitate our buying a copy, and in these days of the high cost of everything including higher taxes, we have to think twice or three times about that. Perhaps we could get a copy at the library; but no, not a chance. If the book is worth reading at all, there is bound to be a waiting list for it a mile long. By the

time it comes into our hands, it will no longer be a new book but an old one. Besides, on second thought, we have no time or we are lazy.

Is there nothing at all that we can do about this matter? Yes, there is still one way out for us: we can always read a review. Not so satisfactory, of course, as reading the book; but, on the other hand, a book review requires little of time and effort, and costs us nothing at all. To be sure, we have to forego all the pleasure to be derived from the reading of the book; but at any rate, we get the gist of the story as well as a list of its good and bad points which, without committing ourselves, we can then relate to our friends in such a way as to lead them to believe that we have surely read it. We shall find our pleasure there.

Thus, sagely, our money still safe in our pockets, we turn away. All that we may ever know about that book will be whatever the reviewer cares to tell us, to our continued interest or our neglect. If the latter, it may be that we shall miss nothing; and again, it may be that we are passing up acquaintance with a book that would have stood for the rest of our days, a milestone upon the highway of our thought.

There are reviewers of books and there are reviewers of men; but, for the latter, we have another name. All that we may ever know about our neighbor will be whatever some acquaintance cares to tell us, since we are generally too indifferent or too indolent to find out the truth for ourselves. If our acquaintance happens to be our neighbor's friend, we shall probably hear of all his virtues; while, if he happens to be his enemy, we shall certainly hear of all his faults. The truth will be somewhere between these extremes, unfortunately seldom to be revealed from a single source. But then, as once long ago was asked, "What is Truth?" ... The Truth is always what we want to believe.

Thus, again in our wisdom, we turn away and, depending upon which extreme we have heard, to our assurance or our prejudice, we cultivate our neighbor or from henceforward we give his house a wide berth. If it is to be the latter, it may be that we shall miss nothing here; and again, it may be that we shall lose the opportunity of gaining a lifelong friend, a treasure that is rarer and is far more to be desired than all the gold of Eldorado or the pearls of the seven seas.

L.B.W.

GUILD MEETINGS

At our last meeting, Mr. W. R. Humphries of Arcadia spoke on the subject, "Nothing New Under the Sun," in the course of which he deftly compared ancient newspapers with modern ones to show that, in the newspaper game at least, there is indeed nothing new.

Mr. Humphries is a versatile speaker who knows well how to tell an amusing anecdote and draw a laugh. Among other things a former newspaperman, he has long been a collector of early newspapers, and in the course of time has gathered into his possession a goodly number of quaint and venerable specimens of the press, some of which date from as far back as 1492. Reading excerpts from these papers by way of illustration of the points brought out in his informal talk he revealed quite obviously how little if anything there is new in the format and the nature of the contents of a modern newspaper. The news items in those early days were handled just as now; editorials of long ago ring familiarly; political rope-pullings to and fro were the same old thing; and even the advertisements, ranging all the way from notices of bargain sales and help wanted to those of liquor ads. and the outpourings of matrimonial agencies, were such as might be lifted bodily today from the metropolitan daily or from the rural weekly "squeek."

Following the speaker, Mr. Rol Lewis gave a very generous showing of some of his fine kodachromes, for the most part beautiful scenes from the High Sierras.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Our next meeting will be held on the evening of Friday, September 3, when Mrs. Richard M. Merriman will speak on the war-significant topic, "Greece, the Land of the Hellenes."

Mr. and Mrs. Merriman lived for quite a number of years in Greece prior to the outbreak of the war where Mr. Merriman was employed as a construction engineer. Of their stay there, much of it was spent in the vicinity of Athens. They left Greece in 1930, at a safe remove from all the late unpleasantness there.

Mrs. Merriman will have many interesting things to tell us of that country and its Balkan neighbors.

BUDGETING THE SEASONS

Beulah Thomas

It is a common failing to let the drudgery of the daily demand of things-that-must-be-done absorb all our thoughts and energy and to feel frustrated because we haven't had time to do the things we really wanted to do. Perhaps there is a truth to be discovered about ourselves that will aid us in fulfilling our individual abilities.

We all know what happens when earth, seed and spring get together, or when the spark in the engine of a car makes contact at the right second. It may be that we can capture some of this force-to-execute by controlling our own human timing.

The farmer does not have much choice in the arrangement of his labors. He plows and plants in the spring, hoes and harvests in the summer and fall, and restores energy in the winter; but, though his work for the year is predetermined, it has the advantage of being rotational, giving him the benefit of change and relief.

All of us have need of change; learning to effect it at the 'right psychological moment' or month is an absorbing experiment. We need, also, for the balancing and rounding out of our personalities, several outlets for expression which can be chosen to suit our inclinations and to fit into our spare time. Most of us do have some spare minutes or hours which can be collected and profitably indulged if we know in advance exactly what we are going to do with them. It is a human characteristic to have 'moods' when we like to do different kinds of creative things, which auspicious occasions may return at regular intervals year after year. Why not, then, set aside certain seasons for these diversified activities and give ourselves an incentive for starting them?

I have worked out a system for the expenditure of my own spare time that is proving satisfactory to me: There is a period I call my 'interior decorating season' which I spend beautifying the house we live in, making new curtains, painting old furniture and such. I begin by making a list of all the things I want to do about the home and revising the list so the most important things are on top. Since I am never able, in my self-imposed limit of time, to accomplish all these things, it seems necessary to set a definite stopping date. This breaking away eliminates a state of tenseness and the feeling of guilt that some of us conscientious souls have if we fail

to make use of every waking moment of our lives. (Another thing I find advisable for myself is to allow a little time to elapse between the seasonal undertakings, in order to relax from the old and get set for the new.)

As a part of my budget, in the early spring and again in the fall I like to plan changes in my wardrobe; I cut out patterns, sew, alter, mend and shop, and then forget all about clothes except to enjoy complacency in wearing them. For a number of favorable weeks I work outdoors in the yard; when I have finished and view the results of my exertions I can almost imagine I am a landscape gardener. There comes a time when I give myself a month or so which I consider my vacation and which I feel I have duly earned. I prohibit myself from starting any new enterprise during these weeks and subject myself to no unnecessary discipline. For me this recuperative rest, also, is most enjoyable.

December is, of course, the Christmas month. We would not change it if we could; we know it is coming as surely as the dawn, and yet we may have failed many times to give it due space on our year's program. I, for one, have been guilty of trying to squeeze spring housecleaning into this short and precious month; and when I do such things, much of the joy and spirit of the season is lost to me.

There are those of us who periodically yearn to improve ourselves in one way or another -- our minds, our figures or physiques, our voices perhaps. Some of us feel that we should spend a certain number of minutes every day, year in and year out, at such tasks, which is a depressing way of anticipating the spending of a lifetime's valuable leisure. How much better to consign to ourselves a limited course of intensive training, and carry through with it, than to fail before we have fairly started.

It is enlightening to study the rhythm of our working tendencies, and inspiring to realize what can be done in the spirit of adventure stimulated by this plan of action. Wishing to do long range planning, one could select his avocations to contribute to the fulfillment of an ultimate goal; or, if such a goal had not been decided upon, any one pursuit might help to establish it. For immediate compensation in each individual success, there is the pleasure in the doing, the commercial value of the work itself, physical health benefits -- this and more; and for many of us, the deciding factor for success may lie in the <u>adjusting</u> of the utilization of our time.

HORACE the guild mouse

i hev bin sitting behind the water cooler lately thinking about the fix we are in. i hev bin around these artistics so long i hev forgot the world but there are a lot of soljers only a mile away and there is nothing like the bang of guns 2 make u think about war. i hev noticed even alf has changed. everybody has changed. even i hev changed.

catherin and leslie saw bernard and washington d c and a lot of congressmen and 8 african lobsters and were glad to get home again. bernard is in camelflage corpse and has got to be a brave man because he is going to fight the war with a paint gun and a air gun. i think they ought to give the boys in the camelflage corpse sumthing to shoot with besides a air gun. u cant lik japs by stinging them with bbs.

alfs jim wuz around the other day and his sun wuz around 2. i wuz wonderin how soon young mike wuz goin to work for duglas after all hes 3. they are putting skul boys to work down there and young mike as says madylines unkel bill is as smart as most of the half shots they got by now. besides pretty soon they got to pension such old men like unkel bill whose got to be sent home so he can ketch up on his sitting.

they had a lovely piknik up herolast month. thee peepul brung wonderful things like chez soofel and chez krackers and a few other uninterestin things like salad and beans wich they spilled on the floor and left hid behind pikchures. but they wuz 2 careful not 2 spill the chez so that i think they must hev bin havin a konspirasy against us mice. i didnt hev nearly enuf 2 eat and all my little ones and mrs m went hongry except for the stuff ground into the floor or chivvied from under the nose of our 6 toed kat. insidently that kat is looking more and more like trubel to me. if she and her brood someday look sirfitted with the fleshpots dont bother to look for me. just pertekt and defend mother.

i wuz thinking we ought to hev a story sometime. what about sum of our members as hev bin thru in the army or navy etc. in the army is jon kenedy bill galbraith and bernard win and dr jakobs. the navy has paul karter and frank playsted. i dont want to be forard but if the editorial bord is 2 buzy and wants help ill be more than glad to do what i can.

SUBMARINE ATTACK

Zoe Colt

Our light sleep was broken by running footsteps and the steward's urgent, "Submarines! All on deck! To lifeboat position!"

In a breath we were out of our bunks, had our raincoats about us, were buckling on our life belts and stumbling through the dark corridors toward the deck. Other groping figures passed us, bumped against us. The deck at last! We found our lifeboats and stood before them in military position. Waited...

A cloud had obscured the moon and there was very little light. Through the black forbidding waters moved our convoy -- twenty-two transports, the cruiser, and twelve destroyers. Colonel Sanders hurried past us. "See that your life belts are fastened securely," he ordered, "and remain quiet."

Darkness! The deafening reverberations of depth bombs! The steady movement of the ship as we moved onward. Occasional whispers, suppressed nervous laughter, tense voices, muffled and cut short.

The sudden light of the moon revealed the sea lashed into a thousand giant geysers by exploding depth bombs. One after another they roared through the water and high into the air, before us, behind us and beside us. In and out among the transports darted the destroyers, seeking the enemies, finding them, signalling, while fresh reports shattered the night.

On and on... Exploding depth bombs! The roar of waters! The ships gliding forward, men and women waiting.

Then, abruptly, the battle ended. The churning seas subsided. The cruiser blew a short, sharp signal, and the destroyers again formed a protective circle about the transports.

The bombs were stilled. The sea rippled again under the white moon and the convoy moved on toward England. Soldiers and nurses dispersed with little comment. They were suddenly sleepy and very tired.

SAN GABRIEL EXHIBITS

For September, the San Gabriel Artists Guild is presenting in its main gallery an exhibition of oils by John Hilton. In the print room, there is to be an exhibit of water colors by Helen Everett. These exhibitions will continue throughout the month.

From 3 until 6 p.m. on Sunday, September 12, the United Daughters of the Confederacy will sponsor a tea and reception honoring the exhibiting artists.

At the guild's regular meeting, Wednesday evening, September 22, at 8 p.m., Ed Ainsworth of the Los Angeles Times will speak, and Mr. Hilton will give a travel lecture illustrated with colored slides and kodachromes. Clyde Forsythe will introduce the speakers.

The main gallery, located on the Plaza, is open daily from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Saturdays and Sundays, from 2 until 5 p.m.

LAGUNA BEACH EXHIBITS

The Laguna Beach Art Association celebrates its 25th anniversary this August with an annual exhibition on display in its main gallery until the end of September. Included in this main exhibition, in addition to the many fine paintings, oils and water colors, by more than forty Southland artists, are several very interesting pieces of modern sculpture by Peterpaul Ott.

First prize for her painting, "Play by the Sea," goes to Alexandra Bradshaw; second prize, to Ralph Holmes for his "Morning Light"; and first honorable mention to Eugenia Grant for her painting, "18th Century China."

Besides this main exhibition, the following one-man exhibitions are also on display throughout September: In the entresol, water colors by Joan Brandt; in the lower gallery, drawings by Augustus John, sculpture by Jacob Epstein, and water colors by Maurice Logan.

ENRICO CONSIDERS. By John Russell McCarthy. Prairie City, Illinois: The Press of James A. Decker. 91 pp. $2.00.

How few are the volumes of real poetry that come from the press even in times of peace; now, that we are in the throes of war, how few are the few! It is a long time since we have so thoroughly enjoyed a book of modern poetry by a living poet as we have the volume, "Enrico Considers," by John Russell McCarthy.

This fine volume consists of about seventy short poems, for the greater part in blank verse with a few in free verse. Of these poems, we like especially the many fresh and concise phrases with which the language is powered, phrases that take one by surprise again and again. In their pithy, rugged forcefulness, there is a Greek quality; and again, in the plan of the book, and in its unity so nicely achieved not only through the medium of Enrico but also through a common background of reference to nature linking most of the poems themselves, there is a likeness to "Spoon River" and to its ancient model, the Greek Anthology. To be sure, this book records only the thought of one, Enrico, while the anthologies record the thoughts of many and thus roam wider fields. It differs, too, from these in that it speaks of the living, of the questions and the affairs of the living, not of the dead. The reader may not always agree with the philosophy here spoken, but he must admire its expression, its strong and beautiful language. This is by far, in our opinion, the best book of poetry that Mr. McCarthy has as yet produced.

Who is this Enrico and what is it that he considers in these poems? He is a Californian of - shall we say, middle age? - a "native son," of course, of Spanish lineage, educated in the Anglo-Saxon tradition. He is a lover of nature and, through nature, has looked upon life and has drawn his own conclusions. He has lived the outdoor life. He has, perhaps, been a forest ranger, a fire fighter, a gardener and a horticulturalist. He is a philosopher, living here quietly and humbly among us, who has often walked the Sierra Madre trails. As a philosopher, he has considered the meaning of life and the meaning of death, those questions that are forever being asked by the questioners but are never answered though answered again and again. He has considered, also, the social problems and those lesser questions, perpetually with us, that inquire into the ways of nations and their rulers,

of the workman and his creed, of man and woman and of man and man. He has set his conclusions down here in these poems, not because he feels that they are the final word but because, since they were of interest to him as a member of the human family, they ought assuredly to be of interest to us all.

L.B.W.

The POE FOUNDATION, Inc.,
Richmond, Virginia.

Mr. Leslie B. Wynne,
Sierra Madre, Calif.

Dear Sir,

It is perfectly splendid to have written so charmingly of us as you did in your fine article of the July issue of the Sierra Madre Arts Guild publication. We are very proud! ... The January number, with your good review of Quinn's biography, is a prized addition to our collection also.... I am charmed with them and delighted with the illustrations or drawings which interested me also. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I extend to you our heartfelt appreciation. It is by such acts of cooperation we are able to continue to grow.

Our existence is of particular importance now as we find we are meaning a great deal to numbers of the armed service who find themselves in our midst. It is a matter of tremendous pride, the calibre of these boys; they are such worthwhile young men, on the whole, so awake to cultural values and wanting to know more about historical and literary figures. It is a great challenge to the museums to keep these things warm for them. We get a goodly number from California, one yesterday from Sacremento.

Many thanks again for your interesting contributions!

Most gratefully and sincerely,

Mary Gavin Traylor,
Secretary.



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Dear Guilder,

Just to remind you that your membership fee for the year, July 1943 to July 1944, is now due. Kindly mail the amount to Elmer M. Weese or to Alfred J. Dewey, or just bring it in to the Wistaria Vine Garden. Thank you.

Sierra Madre Arts Guild